IMPLEMENTATION OF VETPRO, VHA'S NATIONAL CREDENTIALS DATABANK

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides guidance for the implementation and use of VetPro, VHA's national electronic credentials databank.

2. BACKGROUND

   a. VetPro is an Internet enabled system for the credentialing of VHA health care providers that facilitates completion of a uniform, accurate, and complete credentials file. VetPro improves efficiency by allowing providers to enter essential credentialing data only once. As a system accessed through the Internet and protected by sophisticated information security technology, it stores data that is keyed into the system or extracted from images of the primary source verification letters. VetPro was developed and maintained through a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Quality Assurance, Health Resources and Services Administration.

   b. Completing extensive testing at eight sites, including one Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) level centralized credentialing office, VetPro is to be implemented nationwide. National training was completed through a train-the-trainer process during the spring and summer of 2000. All sites procured and tested equipment during this same period. The contractor successfully delivered VetPro in February 2001. The product version has operated since March 2001.

   c. One component of VHA's Patient Safety Program is quality credentialing. Therefore, full implementation of VetPro is necessary to reduce the potential for human error in the credentialing process.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that all individuals, permitted by law and the facility to provide patient care services independently, be credentialed in accordance with VHA Handbook 1100.19.

4. ACTION

   a. All VA health care facilities must have implemented VetPro on March 1, 2001. Implementation begins with the initiation of new appointments to VA health care facilities (i.e., those providers who are initiating a new appointment to a VA health care facility on March 1, 2001 or thereafter). Such providers must be enrolled in VetPro and credentialed using the VetPro process.

   b. Providers currently appointed to VA health care facilities, whose previous credentialing was performed using a paper system, must be enrolled in VetPro and credentialed using VetPro commencing with reappointments initiated on June 1, 2001, or later. These providers, who are

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES APRIL 30, 2006

currently credentialed and appointed in VA health care facilities, may find some data elements populated when they log into VetPro the first time. This data is pre-populated to assist the current providers in completing data entry. The data needs to be reviewed for accuracy and corrected as necessary. Those data elements not pre-populated need to be completed by the provider prior to electronic submission of the completed file. Attachment A diagrams the VetPro credentialing process for currently credentialed providers seeking recredentialing and reappointment and providers new to VA.

    c. The files of providers currently delivering care in VA health care facilities must be converted to the electronic format. This conversion to the electronic record will be performed as providers come due for reappointment in accordance with Attachment B.

    d. Providers who need assistance with data entry into VetPro should contact the local credentialing office or the telephone number listed on credentialing correspondence.

    e. Credentialers needing assistance with the VetPro Software Application are to call the National Help desk to log a National On-Line Information Sharing (NOIS) described in subparagraph 4f, or initiate and send an e-mail from the "Welcome" Screen within the VetPro software itself.

    f. VetPro technology problems should be referred first to the local information technology support staff. All problems that cannot be resolved locally should be reported on a NOIS ticket. *NOTE: To create a NOIS, users should call The National Veterans Health information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) Support (NVS) Help Desk at 1-888-496-4357. NVS Help Desk staff will ask a series of questions to facilitate diagnosis of the problem. NVS staff provide a NOIS ticket number that should be recorded by the user for future reference. The response time for a routine help desk call is two hours or less. If a user requires a more expeditious response the receptionist may transfer the call directly to a support specialist. Help Desk hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM CST.*

5. REFERENCES: VHA Handbook 1100.19, Credentialing and Privileging.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Office of Quality and Performance (10Q) is responsible for the content of this Directive.

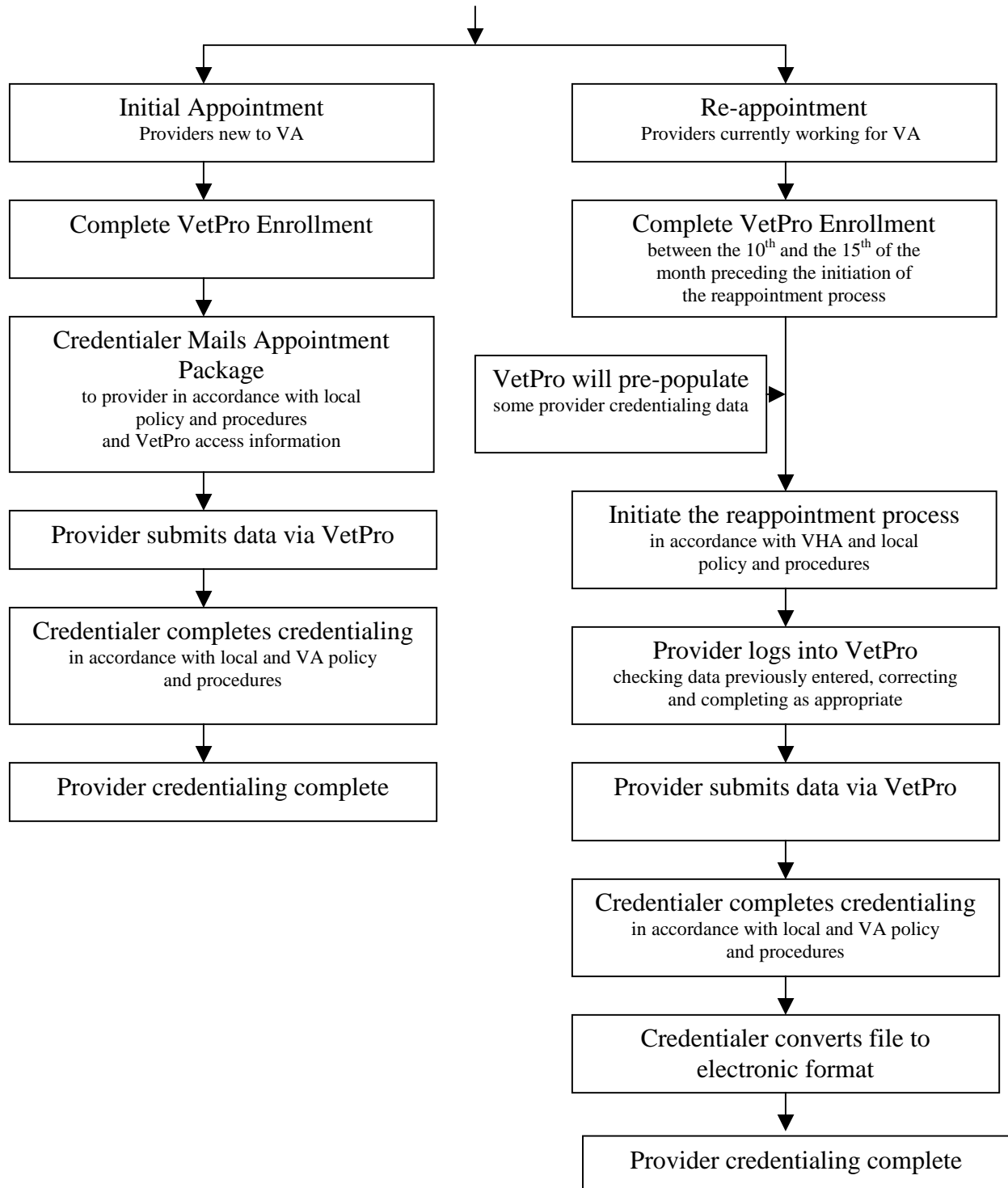**7. RESCISSIONS:** This VHA Directive will expire on April 30, 2006.

                    S/ Tom Sanders for
                    Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
                    Under Secretary for Health

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ATTACHMENT A

VETPRO PROCESS

Initial Appointment	Re-appointment
Providers new to VA	Providers currently working for VA

Complete VetPro Enrollment	Complete VetPro Enrollment
	between the 10th and the 15th of the month preceding the initiation of the reappointment process

Credentialer Mails Appointment Package	VetPro will pre-populate
to provider in accordance with local policy and procedures and VetPro access information	some provider credentialing data

Provider submits data via VetPro	Initiate the reappointment process
	in accordance with VHA and local policy and procedures

Credentialer completes credentialing	Provider logs into VetPro
in accordance with local and VA policy and procedures	checking data previously entered, correcting and completing as appropriate

Provider credentialing complete	Provider submits data via VetPro

	Credentialer completes credentialing
	in accordance with local and VA policy and procedures

	Credentialer converts file to electronic format

	Provider credentialing complete

ATTACHMENT B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONVERSION OF PAPER CREDENTIALS FILE TO VETPRO

NOTE: The reappointment process and conversion of paper credential files of currently appointed providers will be performed as follows:

1. Credentialers must enroll currently appointed providers over a 3-day period beginning on the 10th of the month (or the next workday) prior to initiating the reappointment process. For example, on May 10, 2001, credentialers enroll all currently appointed providers whose reappointment would be initiated by the facility on June 1, 2001; and on June 11, 2001, credentialers will enroll all currently appointed providers whose reappointment would be initiated by the facility on July 1, 2001.

2. Credentialers must reset the provider's password expiration date by the 1st of the month (or the next workday) in which recredentialing for reappointment is to be initiated, allowing 45 days before password expiration. At the same time, the credentialer must print the reappointment information from VetPro and send it, with other local reappointment information, to the provider. The provider verifies or corrects pre-populated data and completes missing information before electronically submitting the file for the reappointment process. Necessary paperwork for privileges and other local requirements must be completed and returned to the facility as directed by the facility.

3. Credentialers must convert the paper file as follows:

   a. All verification documents are to be scanned and uploaded to the VetPro system. Verification documents include all education, training, Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification, specialty and/or subspecialty certification, licensure information, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certificates, State Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS) verification, peer review and/or references, service chief appraisals, National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) responses, Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) responses, and Cautionary Roster (if applicable).

   b. Documents that are not time-limited (i.e., education, training, and previously held [non-active] licenses) are to be uploaded in accordance with VetPro procedures in the screen specific to those documents (i.e., education verification will be scanned and uploaded to the education screen, verification of a residency will be scanned and uploaded to the training screen). These documents will be quality controlled with the credentialer keying appropriate data to populate the database on these documents. The scanned documents and data will then be saved to VetPro.

   c. Time-limited documents (e.g., licensure verification, DEA certificates, State CDS verification, etc.) must be scanned and uploaded to the respective data screen (e.g., verification of licensure will be scanned and uploaded to the license screen). When importing scanned images into the Document Capture window of VetPro, import is to be from the most recent (e.g., the 1999 licensure verification) to the oldest (e.g., the 1990 licensure verification) as a multi-page document. For these multi-page documents, quality control with data entry is to occur only for the most recent documents pertinent to the term of the current (expiring) appointment. For

example, for a provider whose license is renewed every 2 years and is being reappointed in 2001, licensure verifications since 1991 will be scanned and uploaded to VetPro as a single, multi-page document. This document must be retrieved and quality controlled with the appropriate data keyed into VetPro for the last licensure verification in 1999, and saved along with the scanned images.

d. Historical documents, where a specific scan window is not applicable (e.g., references, peer appraisals, service chief appraisals, NPDB responses, Cautionary Roster) are to be scanned and uploaded to VetPro in association with the appointment to which they are applicable in the Personal History screen. Credentialers are to scan starting with the most recent document and continue to the oldest document, creating a single, multi-page scanned document of historical information. For example, the paper file for a provider who has held appointments to a medical treatment facility since 1991, will have a significant number of historical documents. These documents are to be scanned and uploaded to the record for the current facility identified in the Personal History Screen. For a provider who was appointed at a previous VHA medical treatment facility, the historical items from the facility (e.g., NPDB query, reference letters, peer references, and service chief appraisals) are to be scanned and uploaded to the previous facility's record in the Personal History Screen. When retrieved for quality control, no data needs to be keyed for these documents and they are just saved, becoming part of the permanent electronic record.

NOTE: Name documents consistently and in a way that identifies the content. Using a name for the document that is recognizable will facilitate retrieval of these older documents in the future. For example, for State licenses, use the name of the state and the year of expiration (i.e., MI90_1999); for NPDB queries, use NPDB and year of query (i.e., NPDB92_1999); for peer references, use the reference's name and year of reference (i.e., Peer90_1993).

4. Credentialers must perform the remainder of the credentialing process in accordance with standard VHA procedures.